

NEWS &gt; LOCAL NEWS



# Petco Park celebrates 20 years of reinvigorating downtown

Stadium spurs development in surrounding area



Petco Park is celebrating 20 years of Padres baseball downtown in 2024. To mark the anniversary, ABC 10News Anchor Jared Aarons looked into the impact it's had on the Gaslamp area.



By: Jared Aarons

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**SAN DIEGO (KGTV) —** This season, the Padres and Petco Park will celebrate 20 years of baseball in Downtown San Diego.

In those 20 years, a lot has changed in the area. The stadium is a big reason why.

In 1998, when the team joined with city officials and business leaders to push "Measure C" to fund stadium construction, they promised a new wave of development surrounding the stadium. There was almost an "If you build it, they will come," vibe to the campaign.

Now, 26 years since voters approved the measure, and 20 years since the stadium opened, that promise seems fulfilled.

"I believe so," says Michael Trimble, the Executive Director of the Gaslamp Quarter Association.

"The ballpark being built really spurred a lot of development in the East Village. It really helped drive that forward."

Trimble points to a vibrant Gaslamp corridor anchored by the stadium as proof. He says Petco provides more than 100 days throughout the year where thousands of extra people come downtown.

Data from the Downtown San Diego Partnership shows that foot traffic in the area is 35% higher during the baseball season than it is in other months.

"You see people filling the sidewalks way before the game starts, and then staying way later," says Nathan Bishop, the Partnership's Director of Economic Development.

"Imagine it not being here," he adds. "That helps explain the kind of energy and investment we've seen from it."

Since the stadium opened, the Partnership says total investment in the East Village area has topped \$1.2 billion. A total of 16,000 residential units have also been built, with another 3,500 planned.

And 1.6 million square feet of office space has been added, with another 1.8 million square feet under construction.

Bishop says downtown has become a place where people can live, work, and play.

"I think (Petco) was a catalytic type experience. It brings people from all over the region."

That's good for businesses like Panevino. The Italian restaurant opened in 1992 and claims to be one of the first restaurants in the Gaslamp Quarter. They've seen the area change completely from what it was when they moved in.

"It was this restaurant and two other restaurants that opened up and that was the whole thing," says Sara Arjmand, Panevino's Director of Marketing.

"Really no one was down here. It was an old police station, old movie theaters, and no one really came downtown to check it out. Over the years it developed, but that stadium really brought a major boost and development as well."

Other developments, like Horton Plaza, a new library, and the Convention Center helped reinvent downtown.

Looking to the future, Trimble says the planned redevelopment of 5th Avenue as a pedestrian corridor will be the next major shift to the footprint.

But Petco, according to Trimble, Bishop, and others, is what holds it all together.

"We're going to see a huge renaissance when it comes to the redevelopment of the downtown corridor."

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